

An examination of notes indicates that the birds are present throughout the year, but that the actual strength of the group frequenting the hotel building varies. What has always proved to be of remarkable interest is the certainty with which numbers of birds always return immediately a fall of rain occurs, thus indicating their presence in the area. Immediately approaching rain is apparent numbers may be seen swooping under the verandahs and twittering with great excitement. For some hours after the fall has occurred they are busy transporting leaves to the previous season's nesting sites. I have observed such abortive breeding behaviour during Mareh, April, May and June when rain has fallen in 1948, 1949 and 1950, but full-scale breeding has not commenced until August.

—S. R. WHITE, Morawa.

Fox as Predator on Sea Birds.—While walking along North Beach I came across an interesting trail in the sand. It had apparently been made by a fox dragging a heavy body along the sand. The trail ended some 30 yards from the sea near the top of a sandhill. Here was found the body of a Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*) with most of the flesh eaten away.

Following the trail back to the sea showed that it was not a case of scavenging since the cormorant tracks led from the sea to behind a clump of bushes. Here the trail became confused and must have been where the fox struck. From this point the dragging trail commenced. It seems as though high tides had forced the bird to take refuge at a point where the fox was able to approach unobserved. Normally cormorants rest on sand spits where a good field of view is available.

Fox tracks were numerous throughout the sandhill area so doubtless such bush tragedies are more common than usually appreciated.

—V. N. SERVENTY, Subiaco.

Mimicry in the Black-throated Butcher-bird.—I heard one of the Blue-winged Kookaburras calling close to the camp the other day and went out to find it as it was away from the river gums. I particularly went out to discover if a Kookaburra had left the river as I have never yet come across one away from the big timber along the rivers. I found out that it was really a Black-throated Butcher-bird mocking the call. Since then I have seen this species of butcher-bird mocking the magpie and pee-vee calls. It is able to make the imitation perfectly.

—ALF SNELL, Lyndon, via Carnarvon.

[The Black-throated Butcher-bird (*Cracticus nigrogularis*) is recorded as a versatile bird-mimic. S. R. White (*The Emu*, vol. 48, 1949, p. 181) has mentioned its mimicking of the calls of the Yellow-throated Miner, the Ring-neck (Twenty-eight) Parrot and Brown Honeyeater. From the eastern States A. H. Chisholm ("The Problem of Vocal Mimicry," *The Ibis*, 1937, p. 711), quotes instances of the imitation of the calls and songs of the Koel and Channel-billed Cuckoos and Peaceful Dove.

—EDITOR.]